MINUTES

OF THE

THIRTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

Broad-River Baptist Association:

CONVENED AT

Buck Creek Meeting-House,

SPARTANBURG DISTRICT, S. C.,

ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1831,

AND DAYS FOLLOWING.

Rutherfordton:

Roswell Elmer, Jr., Printer.

1832.

MINUTES.

FRIDAY.

The Discourse introductory, was, agreeably to appointment, delivered by Elder Berryman Hicks, from *II. Timothy* ii. chap. 15th verse.—"*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

1. Received and read letters from thirty-one Churches; enrolled the names of their Delegates; and minuted the accounts transmitted.
2. Proceeded to form the Association; and, elected Elder Berryman Hicks Moderator and Philip Ramsaur Clerk. Appointed the Moderator, Clerk and Drury Dobbins a Committee to arrange the business of the Association. After Devotion by Elder S. M'Creary, adjourned until tomorrow, 10 o'clock.

SATURDAY.

Met according to adjournment; and, after prayer by the Moderator proceeded on the business of the Association.

3. High Shoal, a newly constituted Church, presented a letter, requesting admission into our Union,—and after giving satisfaction of their faith and order, were cordially received.
4. Received, and read letters from corresponding Associations: from the Bethel, a letter by their messenger, Elder S. M'Creary; from the Catawba, a letter by their messenger, Elder John Low; from the Saluda, a letter, but no messenger; from the French-Broad, a letter by their messenger, Elder Jacob Cantrell; from the Reedy-River, a

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letter and minutes, by their messengers, W. Rhodes and J. Cooper; from the Charleston, a copy of the minutes for 1830, containing their corresponding letter.

Query, from Friendship Church:—Does the word of God forbid a Church to ordain a brother to the office of a Deacon, whose wife is not a member of the Church? Answer, No; provided the wife possess (abstractly) the prudence and faithfulness of a good wife.

Query, from Cedar Spring Church:—What shall a Church do with members who have been contending, and agree to drop their contentions and live together in the Church, but will not commune together? Answer, that they be dealt with as disorderly members; first, by admonition, and, if, that should prove ineffectual, then, by excommunication.

5. The following brethren were thus appointed, viz: Brother J.W.Lewis to write to the Bethel; D.Dobbins, B.Hicks, H. M'Dougal and J.G.Landrum messengers:—B.T.Kerby to write to the Catawba; himself, J. Lewis and Philip Ramsaur messengers:—J. W. Cooper to write to the Saluda; himself, J. Rainwater and J. G. Landrum messengers:—J. Camp to write to the French-Broad; W. Hannon and Morris Gosnell messengers:—J. G. Landrum to write to the Reedy-River; J. W. Lewis, W. Hannon and J. Rainwater messengers:—J. W. Lewis to write to the Charleston; J. Richards messenger.
6. On motion, resolved, that all the families adjacent to this place, engage in concert of prayer, on to-morrow morning, at, or, before sunrise, for the out-pourings of God's spirit, and special blessings of the Gospel on the session of this Association.
7. Appointed, brethren Hannon, Baily, Ramsaur and Cooper a Committee to appoint Union Meetings; who report as follows:—1st at Union Church, to commence on Friday before the fourth Sunday in March, 1832; 2nd at Antioch, to commence on Friday before the first Sunday in May; 3d at Friendship, to commence on Friday before the first Sunday in July; 4th at Green-River, to commence on Friday before the second Sunday in August.
8. Appointed, Elders M'Creary, Landrum, Hicks and Dobbins, to preach on to-morrow.
9. Appointed, Elders Dobbins, Hicks and Ramsaur to examine corresponding minutes, and to report on Monday.—After devotion, by S. M'Creary, adjourned until Monday, 9 o'clock, A. M.

SUNDAY.

The Gospel was preached with animation by those appointed, to a large and attentive audience; and it is hoped that it was attended with power, and will bring forth fruits unto holiness, and the end will be everlasting life.

MONDAY.

Met according to adjournment; and after prayer by the Moderator, proceeded on the remaining business of the Association.

10. The circular letter referred to, in a resolve of last year, was read, and unanimously adopted. Dr. J. W. Lewis, is appointed to write the circular letter for next year, on the proper method for a Church to pursue, in calling of a Pastor, or supply, and the duties incumbent on them to each other.

11. The Committee appointed to examine the minutes of sister Associations report, that they find nothing that requires insertion.

12. Our next Association, will convene at Sandy-Run meeting-house; 16 miles South-east of Rutherfordton, Rutherford County, North-Carolina, at the usual time. Elder J. G. Landrum, is appointed to preach the introductory discourse, and in case of failure, Elder J. Rainwater to be prepared.

13. The Committee appointed at our last session to attend on Macedonia Church, to look into their standing, &c., report, that on the 27th of November, 1830, they attended and found that the Church had attended strictly to gospel order in her dealing with Jonathan Guthrie, her former Pastor, and complaining member, and consequently, report, her in order, and him in disorder. The Association receives the report, they are discharged, and this Association advises the Churches composing this body, to close their houses of public worship against said GUTHRIE; and further advise the members of the Churches to close the doors of their dwelling against him as a preacher.

14. The corresponding letters were called for, read and approved.

15. Collecting money for printing the minutes; 1000 copies to be struck;* the Clerk is to superintend the printing and distributing the same.

Resolved, that this Association concur with her sisters,

*Price of printing, stitching, &c., these minutes, $30.00

Bethel and Moriah, in setting apart the first Wednesday in May, as a day of public devotion, for the spread of the gospel and continuance of our national blessings.

Resolved, that the thanks of this Association, be given to the citizens of this vicinity, for their hospitality in the accommodation of this Association.

After devotion by Elder S.M'Creary, adjourned to the time and place above mentioned.

BERRYMAN HICKS, *Moderator.*
PHILIP RAMSAUR, *Clerk.*

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The Ministers and Messengers of the Broad-River Association to the Churches they represent, send Christian salutation:—

BELOVED BRETHREN:

According to a resolve of last year, we present you with ANDREW FULLER'S *Letter on Church Discipline;* written in England, in 1799:—

"When the apostles by preaching the word, had gathered in any place a sufficient number of individuals as believers in Christ, it was their uniform practice for the farther promotion of his kingdom in that place, to form them into a religious society, or Christian Church. Being thus associated in the name of Christ, divine worship was carried on, Christian ordinances observed, holy discipline maintained, and the word of life, as the light by the golden candle-sticks, exhibited. Among them our Lord Jesus Christ, as the high priest of our profession, is represented as walking; observing the good and applauding it; pointing out the evil, and censuring it; and holding up life and immortality to those who should overcome the temptations of the present state.

Let us suppose him to walk amongst our several churches, and to address us as he did the seven Churches in Asia. We trust he would find some things to approve; but we are also apprehensive that he would find many things to censure.—Let us then look narrowly into the *Discipline* of the primitive churches, and compare ours with it.

By Discipline, however, we do not mean to include the whole of the order of a Christian Church, but shall at this time confine our attention to that part of Church government which consists in

A mutual watch over one another, and the conduct we are directed to pursue in cases of disorder.

A great part of our duty consists in cultivating what is

lovely, but this is not the whole of it; we must prune as well as plant, if we would bear much fruit, and be Christ's disciples. One of the things applauded in the Church of Ephesus was, that *they could not bear those who were evil.*

Yet we are not to suppose from hence that no irregularity or imperfection whatever, is an object of forbearance. If uniformity be required, in such a degree as that every difference in judgement or practice shall occasion a separation, the Churches may be always dividing in parties, which we are persuaded was never encouraged by the Apostles of our Lord, and cannot be justified in trival or ordinary cases. A contrary practice is expressly taught us in the Epistle to the Romans; (chap. xiv.) and the cases in which it is to be exercised are there pointed out. An object of forbearance however must be one that may exist without being an occasion of dispute and wrangling in the Church; it must *not be of doubtful disputation.*—Ver. 1. It must not also respect things which do not enter into the essence of God's *kingdom*, the leading principles of which are *righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.*—Ver 16, 17. That which does not subvert the gospel of the kingdom, nor set aside the authority of the king, though it be an imperfection, is yet to be borne with. Finally it must be something which does not *destroy the work of God*, or which is not inconsistent with the progress of vital religion in the Church or in one's own soul.—Ver. 20. In all such cases we are not to judge one another, but every man's conscience is to be his judge.—Ver. 23.

In attending to those things which are the proper objects of discipline, our first concern should be to see that all our measures are aimed at *the good of the party, and the honour of God.* Both these ends are pointed out in the case of the Corinthian offender. All was to be done *that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord, and to clear themselves* as a church from being partakers of his sin. If these ends be kept in view, they will preserve us from much error; particularly from the two great evils into which Churches are in danger of falling, false lenity, and unchristain severity. There is often a party found in a community, who, under the name of tenderness, are for neglecting all wholesome discipline; or if this cannot be accomplished, delaying it to the utmost.—Such persons are commonly the advocates for disorderly walkers, especially if they be their particular friends or relations. Their language is "He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone. My brother hath fallen to day, and I may fall

to-morrow." This spirit though it exists only in individuals, provided they be persons of any weight or influence, is frequently known to impede the due execution of the laws of Christ; and if it prevade the community, it will soon reduce it to the lowest state of degeneracy. Such for a time was the spirit of the Corinthians; but when brought to a proper sense of things, what *carefulness it wrought in them, yea what clearing of themselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what vehement desire, yea what zeal, yea what revenge.* In opposing the extreme of false tenderness, others are in danger of falling into unfeeling severity. This spirit will make the worst of every thing, and lead men to convert the censures of the Church into weapons of private revenge. Persons of this description, know not of what manner of spirit they are. They lose sight of the good of the offender. It is not love that operates in them; for love worketh no evil. The true medium between these extremes is a union of *mercy and truth.* Genuine mercy is combined with faithfuluess, and genuine faithfulness, with mercy; and this is the only spirit that is likely to *purge iniquity*—Prov. xvi. 6. Connivance will produce indifference: and undue severity will arm an offender with prejudice, and so harden him in sin: but the love of God and of our brother's soul, are adapted to answer every good end. If we love God like Levi, we shall know no man after the flesh, nor acknowledge our nearest kindred; but shall observe his word and keep his covenant. And if we love the soul of our brother, we shall say, "He is fallen to-day, and I will reprove him for his good: I may fall tomorrow, and then let him deal the same with me." Love is the grand secret of the church discipline, and will do more than all other things put together, towards insuring success. In the exercise of discipline, it is necessary to distinguish between faults which are the consequence of sudden temptation and such as are the result of premeditation and habit. The former requires a compassionate treatment; the latter a greater portion of severity. The sin of Peter in denying his Lord was great, and if noticed by the enemies of Christ, might bring great reproach upon his cause; yet compared with the sin of Solomon it was little. He first gave way to licentiousness, then to idolatry, and on finding that God, as a punishment for his sin, had given ten tribes to Jeroboam, he sought to kill him. Cases like this are immediately dangerous, and require a prompt and decided treatment; and in which a hesitating tenderness would be the height of cruelty. "Of

some have compassion making, a difference; others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."—Jude 22, 23;—see also Gal. vi. 1. In all our admonitions, regard should be had to the age and character of the party. An Elder as well as other men, may be in fault, and a fault that may require to be noticed; but let him be told of it in a tender and respectful manner.—While you expostulate with younger men on a footing of equality, pay a deference to age and officer.—"Rebuke not an Elder, but entreat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren."—1. Tim. v. 1.

In the due execution of Christian discipline, there are many things to be done by members of Churches *individually;* and it is upon the proper discharge of these duties, that much of the peace and purity of a church depends. If we be faithful to one another, there will be but few occasions for public censure. Various improprieties of conduct, neglects of duty, and declensions in the power of Godliness, are the proper objects of pastoral admonition. It is one essential branch of this office *to rebuke and exhort with all long suffering*—2 Tim. iv. 2. Nor is this work confined to pastors; Christians are directed to *admonish one another*—Rom. xv. 14. Indeed there are things which a wise and affectionate people will be concerned to take upon themselves, lest a prejudice be contracted against the ministry, which may prevent its good effects. This is peculiarly necessary in the settling of differences, in which whole families may be interested, and in which it is extremely difficult to avoid the suspicion of partiality. In all cases of personal offence the rule laid down by our Lord, in the 18th chap. of Matthew, ought to be attended to; and no such offence ought to be admitted before a Church till the precept of Christ has been first complied with, by the party or parties concerned.*

In many cases where faults are not committed immediately against us, but which are known to a few individuals, love

*In the present impefect state, even Christians in their intercourse with each other, are liable to injure their brethren, and thus break the bond of harmony and love essential to be maintained among the followers of Christ. We may not in such cases pursue the course of the world, lay up the injury in our hearts, and vent bitter reproaches against the character of our brother; thus dishonouring religion, and provoking the offender to justify himself, and persist in his sin; but must discourse with him in private sincerely endeavoring to win him over to see and acknowledge the evil of his conduct. If the right course be not pursued in such cases, great detriment may ensue to the interests of religion, but the offending brother will be particularly in danger. Our Saviour accordingly, having caution-

will lead us to endeavour to reclaim the party, if possible, without any further exposure. A *just man will not be willing* unnecessarily, to make his brother *a public example.* The

ed us very particularly against being the occasion of sin to any of those little ones that believe in him, immediately adds, in the passage under consideration, Math. xviii. 15, 16, 17. "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican." Thus we have here a perfect and most important rule for terminating differences between professing Christians.

The same sin of malice against our brother on account of an injury received from him, and the same danger of his being provoked or suffered to persist in his sin impenitent, is guarded against in the Old Testament, Lev. xix. 17. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." The passage under consideration is however, by many supposed to refer to public offences. But the nature of the rule, and the evidence from the context, that Christ had a different design, limit this passage to the interpretation already given. Would Christ, in giving a rule for the regulation of discipline in his kingdom, give no other description of the offences to be taken notice of, than what is contained in these words: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee." Would he mention the smallest and most indirect part of the offence as a proper description of it? So far is this both from propriety, and also from the tenor of the scripture, that it is believed we have no example of an offence against God, being called a trespass against a brother. But offences against brethren, particularly when we lead them to sin, are called offences against Christ. David after he had committed adultery with Uriah's wife, and caused his death, says to God, "against thee, and thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight. But to speak of an offence against God, as a trespass against a brother, is evidently inverting the order of things, and we may be sure that in laying down a rule, Christ did not leave offences aimed immediately against him and his cause, to be understood by the expression, 'If thy brother should trespass against thee." The direction, "Go & tell him his fault between him and thee alone," is also a proof that a personal offence is only intended. For if each of the brethren, is to converse with the offending brother, why should the rule particularly require this to be done privately? Surely there could be no harm if in the first instance, two or three of the brethren, most respectable for their piety and standing in the church, should unite in endeavouring to reclaim the offender.

The context still more clearly evinces, that the rule in question relates solely to personal offences. When Christ had done speaking, Peter asked, "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him; till seven times?"—Jesus answered him, "I say not unto thee seven times; but until seventy times seven." He immediately added, "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king who would take account of his servants. And when he had began to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed ten thousand talents. This beautiful parable, incalculating the propriety and necessity of forgiving injuries, is familiarly known; and as it can apply only to personal offences, the discourse and

scriptures give particular encouragement to these personal and private attempts. "If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." James v. 19, 20.

In cases of *evil report*, where things are said of a brother in our hearing, which, if true, must effect his character, and the purity of the church, it cannot be right to go on to report it. Love will not lead to this. Many reports, we know, are unfounded; or if true in the main, they may have been aggravated; or there may be circumstances attending the case, which if fully understood, would make things appear very different from the manner in which they have been represented. Now it is almost impossible that any one but the party himself should be acquainted with all these circumstances, or able to give a full account of them. No time, therefore, should be lost, ere we inquire at the hand of our brother; or if on any consideration we feel that to be unsuitable, it would be proper to apply to an officer of the church, who may conduct it with greater propriety.

There are cases of a more public nature still, in which much of the peace and happiness of the church depends upon

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precept which gave occasion to it, can extend no farther. The reader is requested to turn to the 17th chapter of Luke, the four first verses of which are evidently an epitome of the 18th of Matthew. The 3d and 4th verses contain the following instruction. "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day; and seven times in a day, turn again to thee, saying I repent; thou shalt forgive." This evidently cannot apply to public offences.

It is contended that the passage in question furnishes a perfect directory in church discipline. But this is far from being the case, even if the rule were intended for public offences. Is it the duty of all of the members of the church to take the steps (as it is called) with the offender? It is not pretended. Who then shall go? Here the rule is defective. Besides, suppose the offender should neglect to hear the church, where is the direction to inflict the church censures? There is no direction of this kind here, at all. From various passages in the New Testament we need be at no loss how to proceed in cases of church discipline. "Them that sin, rebuke before all." "Keep no company with him, that he may be ashamed." As for such as have sinned with a high hand, like the incestuous person at Corinth, they must be forthwith excluded from the church. And we are doubtless at liberty to take any method to ascertain the conduct of a brother, which prudence may recommend.

The Scripture rules for church discipline do not take away the right of individuals to admonish an offending brother; this right or rather duty, equally exists whatever mode of discipline may be adopted. Any brother whose standing in the church, or acquaintance and connection with the offender, gives him a prospect of success, should use his influence to reclaim him.

the conduct of its members in their individual capacity. The charge given by the apostle to the Romans, chap. xvi. 17,18, though applicable to a church, yet seems to be rather addressed to the individuals who compose it. "Now I beseech you brethren, mark them who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." The characters to be *avoided* appear to be persons whose object it is to set up a party in the church, of which they may be the heads or leaders; a kind of religious demagogues. Such men are found at one time or other, in most societies; and in some cases the peace of the churches has been invaded by strangers, who are not of their own community. Let the "brethren" have their eye upon such men. "Mark them:" trace their conduct, and you will soon discover their motives.—Stand aloof from them, and "avoid them," avoid striking in with their dividing measures. In case of their being members, the church, collectively considered, ought, no doubt, to put away from amongst them such wicked persons: but as every collective body is composed of individuals, if those individuals suffer themselves to be drawn away, the church is necessarily thrown into confusion, and rendered incapable of a prompt, unanimous and decided conduct. Let members of churches therefore beware how they listen to the insinuations of those who would entice them to join their party. Men of this stamp are described by the Apostle, and therefore may be known, particularly by three things—First by the doctrine; "it is contrary to that which has been learned of Christ." Secondly, by their selfish pursuits; "they serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies." Thirdly, by their insinuating whining pretences of affectionate regard towards their partizans; "by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple."

To this may be added, there are duties on individuals in their behaviour towards persons who lie under the censure of the church, if they still continue in a state of impenitence, persist in their sins, or be irreconcilable to the Church's proceedings with them. We may, it is true, continue our ordinary and necessary intercourse with them as men, in the concerns of this life: but there must be no familiarity, no social interchange, no visitings to them, nor recieving visits from them, nothing in short that is expressive of connivance at

their conduct.—"If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, we must not keep company with such an one, no not to eat." (1. Cor. v. 11.) If individual members act contrary to this rule, and carry it freely towards an offender, as if nothing had taken place, it will render the censure of the church of none effect. Those persons also who behave in this manner will be considered by the party as his friends, and others who stand aloof as his enemies, or at least as being unreasonably severe; which will work confusion, and render void the best and most wholesome discipline. We must act in concert, or we may as well do nothing. Members who violate this rule are partakers of other men's sins, and deserve the rebukes of the church, for counteracting its measures.

With respect to those things which fall under the cognizance of the church in its *collective capacity*, we earnestly recommend, in general, that every thing be done, not only with a view to the honor of God, and the good of the party, as before observed, *but with a special regard to the revealed will of Christ.* That some kind of order be preserved in every community, is necessary to its existence. Decency, reputation, and even worldly policy, will induce us to take some notice of gross immoralities, but this is not christian discipline; nor will it be productive of its salutary effects. In the choice of officers, few if any churches would elect a profligate: but if opulence be allowed to supply the place of spirituality, or ambitious, or litigious characters, be preferred on the principle of expediency, as a means of keeping them in a better humour, is it not carnal? So, in matters of discipline, few churches would suffer a grossly immoral or litigious character to continue amongst them unnoticed: but if, instead of a calm, impartial and decided procedure, we enter into pusillanimous compromises with the offender, consenting that he should withdraw of his own accord; if the crimes of rich and popular men be either entirely overlooked, or but slightly touched, lest the cause should suffer from their being offended; or if the misconduct of poor men or servants he disregarded; on the ground of their being persons of little or no account, *are we not carnal and walk as men?* Brethren! Are there any such things amongst us? Search and consider. Such things ought not to be. The private withdrawing of an individual, if it be without good reasons, may justify a church in admonishing him, and if he cannot be re-

claimed, in excluding him: but it cannot of itself, dissolve the relation. Till such exclusion has taken place, he is a member, and his conduct effects their reputation as much as that of any other member. With regard to neglect of discipline, lest it should injure the *cause*, what cause must that be which requires to be thus supported? Be it our concern to obey the laws of Christ, and leave him to support his own cause. If it sink by fulfiling his commandments, let it sink. He will not censure us for not supporting the ark with unhallowed hands. And if it be criminal to fear the rich, it cannot be less so to despise the poor. Let brotherly love abound towards both. Do all things without partiality, and without hypocrisy. We cannot enumerate all the particular cases which fall under the cognizance of a christain church, but shall mention a few which are recorded in the scriptures for our imitation.

A departure from the faith of the Gospel, or any of its leading doctrines, is an object of christian discipline. "I would they were even cut off that trouble you—I have a few things against thee, because thou hast them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate—beware of the concission. A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."—(Gal. v. 12. Rev. ii. 14. 15. Phil. iii. 2. Tit. iii. 10.) It is worthy of notice, that the only passage in the New-Testament, wherein heresy is introduced as *an object of discipline*, makes no mention of any thing as composing it but *what relates to the principles of the party*. It may be supposed that those who were accounted heretics by the apostles were as impure in their lives as they were anti-christian in their doctrine, and that they were commonly disturbers of the peace and unity of the churches: but however this might be, neither of these evils are alleged as the reason for which the heretic was to be *rejected*. All that is mentioned is this; "He is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." He is "subverted;" that is, his professed faith in the gospel is in effect overturned, or rendered void; consequently he requires to be treated as an unbeliever. He is 'condemned of himself;' that is, the gospel being a consistent whole, he who rejects some of its leading principles, while he professes to retain others, is certain to fall into self-contradiction; which, if clearly pointed out in a "1st & 2nd admonition" & he still persists, he will be compelled obsti-

nately to shut his eyes against the light, and thus "sin" against the dictates of his own conscience. It has been asked by persons who disapprove of all church proceedings on account of a difference in religious principles, who is to judge what is heresy? We answer, Those who are to judge what is immorality in dealing with loose characters. To suppose it impossible to judge what heresy is, or to deny that the power of so deciding rests in a Christain church, is to charge the apostolic precept with impertinence. It is true, the judgment of a church may be erroneous as well as that of an individual; and it becomes them in their decisions to consider that they will all be revised at the great day; but the same may be said of all human judgment civil or judicial, to which no one is so void of reason, as on this account to object.

It has been farther objected, that censuring a person on account of his religious sentiments, invades the right of private judgment, is inconsistent with the liberties of the gospel, and contrary to the leading principles on which Potestants have separated from the church of Rome, and Protestant dissenters from the church of England. The right of private judgment, while we claim no connection with others, is an undoubted right. We may be christians, infidels, or atheists, and none but God has any control over us: but if we desire the friendship and esteem of good men notwithstanding, or claim admission to a christian church; or should we be in already, and claim a right to continue our situation, surely they would not be obliged to comply. If so, our right of private judgement must interfere with that of others, whose judgement tells them that there can be no fellowship between light and darkness, Christ with Belial or communion between him that believeth and an infidel. If the liberty of the gospel consists in a right of fellowship with christain churches, whatever be our principles, it will follow not only that unbelievers may claim visible communion with believers, but that no exclusions for immorality can be justified, provided the party insists that his sentiments are in harmony with his practice. There is a great variety of opinions as to what is morality, as well as to what is truth. One loose character thinks there is no "sin in frequenting the ball room, the play house, the retail shop &c." Another believes in polygamy, a third in concubinage: and a fourth can see no harm in fornication, nor even in adultery, provided it be undiscovered.*

If the churches of Rome and England had done nothing

*Such was the morality taught by Mr. Hume.

more than exclude from their society those characters whom they considered as deviating from the first principles of the gospel, without subjecting them to civil penalties or disabilities, however we might have disputed the truth of their doctrines, we should not justly have objected to their discipline. We should suppose that the separation of the Protestants from the one, and of Protestant dissenters from the other ; was for the sake of enjoying a purer church state, wherein they might act up to the laws of Zion's King ; and not that they might live as though there was no king in Israel, which is the case where every man does that which is right *in his own eyes.*

In cases of notorious and complicated wickedness, it appears that in the primitive churches, immediate exclusion was the consequence. In the case of the incestuous Corinthian there are no directions given for his being admonished ; and excluded only in case of his being incorrigibly impenitent. The apostle determined what should be done.—"In the name of the Lord Jesus when ye are gathered together to deliver such a one unto Satan."

We cannot but consider it an error in the discipline of some churches where persons have been detected of gross aggravated wickedness, that their exclusion has been suspended, and in many cases omitted on the ground of their professed repentance. While the evil was a secret it was persisted in, but when exposed by a public detection, then repentance is brought forward, as it were in arrest of judgment. But can that repentance be genuine which is pleaded for the purpose of warding off the censures of a christian church ? We are persuaded it cannot. The eye of a true penitent will be fixed on the greatness of his sin, and he too be the last to talk of his repentance for it. So far from pleading it, in order to evade censure, he will censure himself, and desire nothing more than that testimony be borne against his conduct for the honor of Christ. But allowing that repentance in such cases be sincere, still it is not of such account as to set aside the necessity of exclusion. The end to be answered by this measure is not merely the good of the party, but the "clearing" of a christain church from the very appearance of conniving at immorality ; and which cannot be accomplished by repentance only. Though Miriam might be truly sorry for her sin in having spoken against Moses, and though she might be healed of her leprosy ; yet "the Lord said unto Moses, if her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days ? Let her be shut out from the camp

seven days, and after that let her be received in again."—(Numb. xii. 14.)

We do not suppose however, that every notorious fault requires immediate exclusion. The general rule given is—that *notorious evils should meet with a public rebuke.*

"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."—(1 Tim. v. 20.) But this proceeding does not appear to amount to exclusion; it is rather of the nature of a *censure* or *reprimand*, accompanying admonition. To us it appears that the circumstances attending a sin, ought to determine whether it require immediate exclusion or not. If these be highly aggravating: If there appear to have been premeditation, intention, and perseverance in the crime, *put away from amongst yourselves that wicked person:* but if circumstances extenuate, rather than heighten the evil, solemn admonition, accompanied with rebuke, ought to suffice, and no exclusion to follow but in case of incorrigible impenitence.

There are also faults which do not come under the denomination of notorious sins, wherein directions are given for recovering the offenders *without any mention being made of exclusion either immediate or ultimate.* There is perhaps in all the churches a description of men whose characters are far from being uniformly circumspect, and yet not sufficiently irregular to warrant their being separated from communion.—They are disorderly walkers; busy bodies in other men's matters, while negligent of their own; in a word unamicable characters. Now those that are such we are directed to exhort, and charge that they conduct themselves as becometh christians. If after this they continue disorderly, observe a degree of distance in your conduct towards them; withdraw your intimacy; let them feel the frowns of their brethren: yet be not wholy reserved, but occasionally explain to them the reasons of your conduct, affectionately admonishing them at the same time to repentance and amendment of life: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly; and not after the tradition which he received from us. For we hear that there are some who walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy bodies. Now them that are such we command, and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. And if any obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed: yet count him not as an enemy, but ad-

monish him as a brother." 2 Thes. iii. 6—15. If churches were to consult only their own reputation; they would often discard such persons at an early period: but where there is reason to hope that the heart is right in the main, great forbearance must be exercised, and long perseverance in endeavoring to recover. How many imperfections were discovered in the conduct of the twelve Apostles, while their Lord was with them, and what an example of forbearance has he left us? One character reclaimed is of greater account and more to the honor of a Christian church, than many discarded.

Finally, a watchful eye upon the state of the church, and of particular members, with a seasonable interposition, may do more towards the preservation of good order than all other things put together. Discourage whisperings, backbitings, and jealousies. Frown on tale bearers, and give no ear to their tales. Nip contentions in the bud. Adjust differences in civil matters among yourselves. Bring together at an early period those in whom misconception and distrust have begun to operate, ere ill opinion ripen into settled dislike. By a frank and timely explanation in the presence of a common friend that may be healed in an hour, which if permitted to proceed, a series of years cannot eradicate. Be affectionately free with one another. Give tender and faithful hints where it appears to you that one of your brethren is in danger of being drawn aside from the principles or spirit of the gospel. Let all be given to expect them, from their first entering into connection with you. If any one take offence at such treatment, give him to understand that he who cannot endure a caution or a reproof, is unfit for christain society; and is in the utmost danger of falling into mischief. The free circulation of the blood, and the proper discharge of all the animal functions, are not more necessary to the health of the body than good discipline is to the prosperity of a community.

If it were only considered, how much the general interests of religion, and even the salvation of men, may be affected by the purity and harmony of christian churches, we should tremble at the idea of their being interrupted by us. The planting of a church in a neigborhood where the gospel is preached, and the ordinances of Christ administered in their purity, is a great blessing. It is a temple reared for God, in which he delights to record his name, to meet with his humble worshippers, and to bless them. We have seen churches of

this description, in the midst of a career of spiritual prosperity, edifying one another in love, and gathering souls to the Redeemer's standard, all in a little time, blasted and ruined by some unhappy event that has thrown them into disorder. One of the members, it may be, has acted disorderly or unworthily—he is reproved by a brother or admonished by the church—instead of receiving it in love, he resents it as an offence—his relations or particular acquaintances take on his part—discipline is interrupted—"the offender pleads his justification under various false colorings—accuses his faithful brother or brethren with evil designs"—hard things are said on both sides—the bond of love is broken—tender minds are grieved, and retire—worship is but thinly attended to, and the enjoyment of it is vanished—God's friends ("like the dove in a desolate place") mourn in secret, while the enemies of Christ triumph, saying "aha! You wrangle and quarrel as we do! your religion is no better than ours!" and thus they secretly sneer, "so would we have it!"

Truly it is a serious thing to occasion the ruin of a church of Christ? "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy!"

BERRYMAN HICKS, *Moderator.*
PHILIP RAMSAUR, *Clerk.*

STATE OF THE CHURCHES.

Ministers' names are in SMALL CAPITALS, Licensed Preachers' in *italics*. Those marked with an * were absent. A † denotes Churches without a Pastor or supply.

	Churches.	*Where situate.*	*Post Offices.*	*Delegates' Names.*	*Baptized.*	*Rec'd by l'r.*	*Restored.*	*Dismis'd.*	*Excom'd.*	*Dead.*	*Total.*	*Sunday.*	*Contributions.*	*By whom supplied.*
1.	Buffalo	York, S. C.	Erwinsville, N. C.	B. HICKS, P. RAMSAUR	0	0	0	0	0	2	90	4	$3.00	B. HICKS.
2.	Sandy Run	Rutherford, N. C.	Mooresboro	D. DOBBINS, D. Gold	0	2	1	14	2	1	124	3	$2.00	D, DOBBINS.
3.	Friendship	Spartanburg, S. C.	Smith's Store	J. Bearden, J. Calvert	0	2	0	1	0	3	62	1	$1.43¾	J. RAINWATER.
4.	Green's Creek	Rutherford, N. C.	White-Oak	J. BLACKWELL, C. Wilson	1	1	0	4	2	0	43	1	$1.00	J. BLACKWELL.
5.	Boiling Spring †	Spartanburg. S. C.	C. House	(No return.)										
6.	Cedar Spring	do.	do.	H. M'DOUGAL, J. W. Cooper, D. Golightly	5	7	0	1	0	1	59	4	$1.25	H. M'DOUGLE,
7.	Green River	Rutherford, N. C.	White-Oak	J. BLACKWELL* J. Allison, B. Coward	4	4	0	3	0	0	57	2	$1.00	J. BLACKWELL.
8.	Buck Creek†	Spartanburg, S. C.	C. House	R. C. Poole, W. Hines	0	2	0	1	4	0	80	3	$1.06¾	
9.	Long Creek	Lincoln, N. C.	Hoylesville	B. T. KIRBY, J. LEWIS*	3	1	0	0	0	0	44	3	$1.25	B. T. KIRBY.
10.	H'd Tiger River	Greenville, S. C.	Meritsville	P. Taylor	23	3	1	3	0	0	69	3	$1.31¼	I. LEMMONS
11.	Providence	Spartanburg, S. C.	Clarkesville	J. RICHARDS, J. Camp.	0	1	0	3	2	0	50	1	$1.00	J. RICHARDS.
12.	Elbethel	Union, S. C.	Hancocksville	J. Harrington	0	0	0	1	0	0	31	4	$0.50	W. WALKER.
13.	Concord	Rutherford, N. C.	Rutherfordton	A. Green	0	3	0	1	0	0	41	2	$0.75	D. DOBBINS.
14.	Goucher Creek	Spartanburg, S. C.	H'd Navigation	J. Woods, M. Wilkins	0	2	1	3	0	0	57	3	$1.00	J. RICHARDS.
15.	Union	Lincoln, N. C.		A. ABERNATHY*										
16.	Antioch	York, S C.	Harmony	G. WILKIE* J. James	0	0	0	12	7	0	100	1	$2.00	G. WILKIE.
17.	Zion	Rutherford, N. C.	Garners Ford	S. Baily, W. Covington	3	0	0	0	2	1	75	1	$1.91	D. DOBBINS.
18.	Bethlehem	Spartanburg, S. C.	C. House	A. CROW, R. Moss	3	3	0	1	2	0	115	3	$2.00	J. G. Landrum.
19.	Holly Spring	do.		(No Return)										
20.	Wolf's Creek	do.	Earlesville	W. HANNON, T. Grogan	4	5	1	2	0	0	54	3	$1.12½	J. BLACKWELL.
21.	New Prospect	do.	do.	R. Bullington, W. Wilkins, S. Bullington	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	4	$1.00	W. HANNON.
22.	Washington	Greenville, S. C.	Milford	I. LEMMONS* J. J. Reynolds, W. Robles	1	2	0	6	0	1	30	4	$1.06¾	I. LEMONS.
23.	Cross Roads†	do.	Gowensville	J. Ballou, M. Gosnell	0	1	0	1	0	0	16	1	$1.00	
24.	Macedonia	Spartanburg, S. C.	Zidon	J. Thomas, M. Webber, S. Guthrie	0	6	0	3	8	1	52	2	$1.25	P. RAMSAUR.
25.	Philadelphia	do.	Smith's Store	J. RAINWATER, R. West	2	1	0	0	0	0	37	2	$1.06¾	J. RAINWATER.
26.	Bethesda	do.	C. House	N. Pettit, J. P. Pettitt	0	1	0	10	2	0	41	1	$0.50	A. CROW.
27.	Camp's Creek	Rutherford, N. C.	Mooresboro	J. Bridges, Nathaniel Jones	0	0	0	1	1	1	30	3	$0.90	B. HICKS.
28.	State Line	Spartanburg, S. C.	Island Ford, N. C.	D. Scruggs, P. Gosnell	1	2	0	0	1	0	24	2	$0.68¾	J. RICHARDS.
29.	Mount Ararat	Union, S. C.	Hancocksville	D. Malcomson	0	0	0	3	2	0	43	2	$1.00	G. WILKIE.
30.	Mount Zion	Spartanburg, S. C.	C. House	J. G. Landrum, J. W. Lewis	1	1	0	0	1	0	31	1	$0.75	J. G. Landrum.
31.	Hebron	Lincoln, N. C.	Hoylesville	(Letter)	0	0	0	0	0	2	33	4	$0.25	B. T. KIRBY.
32.	High Shoal	Rutherford, N. C.	High Shoal	J. PADGETT, J. Dobbins, W. WILKIE*	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	4	$0.50	PADGETT, & WILKIE.
					51	50	4	83	36	13	1537		$33.56	